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PRESS RELEASE

Baker-Polito Administration Awards \$23 Million to Improve State-Aided Public Housing for Seniors

Awards will enable Housing Authorities to make substantial renovations to property, bring in supportive services, and ensure accessibility for senior residents

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Housing and Community Development

Executive Office of Housing and Economic Development

Office of Governor Charlie Baker and Lt. Governor Karyn Polito

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FITCHBURG — Today, Lt. Governor Karyn Polito joined Housing and Community Development Undersecretary Janelle Chan, Fitchburg Mayor Stephen DiNatale, Senator Dean Tran, Representative Stephan Hay, and other local officials to announce \$23 million in state funding to support substantial improvements at seven local housing authorities across the Commonwealth. Today's award will preserve and enhance 413 state-aided public housing units and improve the lives of senior residents.

"In 2017, we established the Council to Address Aging in Massachusetts because older adults are the fastest growing population in our Commonwealth, and it is vital we pursue age- and dementia-friendly policies throughout state government," **said Governor Charlie Baker.** "In their report last year, the council identified housing for seniors as a critical issue. I am proud of the work our administration is doing to prioritize affordable housing for seniors through programs like ModPHASE, affordable rental housing awards, supportive housing awards, and more."

Though the Modernizing Public Housing and Supporting Elders (ModPHASE) program, housing authorities will undertake major rehabilitation projects to address capital needs and improve accessibility to better support aging-in-community for senior residents. This program also requires housing authorities to expand supportive services and outreach to senior residents. The Department of Housing and Community Development partners with the Executive Office of Elder Affairs to promote aging-in-community strategies at local housing authorities and reviews ModPHASE applications to ensure supportive services match community needs.

“Our older and adults and seniors deserve affordable, high-quality housing that meets their needs and enables them to age in the community they love,” **said Lt. Governor Karyn Polito.** “Today’s awards will enable our residents in state-aided public housing to continue thriving, and provide the necessary resources for Local Housing Authorities to address the needs of an aging population. Each of these awards will enable our local partners to pursue major capital upgrades and incorporate new supportive services for those who need it.”

“Preserving the Commonwealth’s current affordable housing while encouraging new production is critical to addressing our current crisis and preparing Massachusetts for continued growth,” **said Housing and Economic Development Secretary Mike Kennealy.** “With a growing, aging population and the deep need for affordable housing across the state, funding through programs like ModPHASE are investments in both current and future residents.”

“Our 45,000-unit portfolio of state-aided public housing is an incredible asset for Massachusetts, and we are committed to ensuring it remains so for the next generation. The investments we make today will provide dividends long into the future, ensuring our public housing continues to support vulnerable populations, including low-income seniors, families, and individuals with disabilities,” **said Housing and Community Development Undersecretary Janelle Chan.** “I am thankful to Governor Baker and Lt. Governor Polito for continuing to make housing a priority, and to our partners in the legislature for passing the largest affordable housing bond bill in our Commonwealth’s history, which includes significant funding to address the capital needs of our state-aided public housing and enables us to make today’s awards.”

“Helping older adults age in the communities they call home is good for residents and good for the Commonwealth,” **said Executive Office of Elder Affairs Secretary Elizabeth Chen.** “I’m especially pleased to see the partnerships with regional Aging Services Access Points, and local Councils on Aging, as they represent the ‘front door’ to access elder services and supports in Massachusetts.”

Lt. Governor Polito made Thursday’s announcement at Wallace Towers in Fitchburg. With today’s grant award, the Fitchburg Housing Authority will modernize this 130-unit, high-rise elderly development built in 1973, including upgrading 13 accessible units to current code. Fitchburg plans to coordinate existing health care programs with new nutritional and socialization programs to promote aging-in-community in this downtown development with access to local amenities.

“It is with great pleasure that the City of Fitchburg and the Fitchburg Housing Authority accept the DHCD ModPHASE grant of \$8 million for Wallace Towers,” **said Mayor Stephen L. DiNatale.** “I could not be more thankful to The Baker-Polito Administration, who have been significant advocates for the people of Fitchburg. This grant will be used for extensive improvements to our senior housing. Aging in Place facilities, such as Wallace Towers, have become crucially important with the rising costs of nursing homes. I would also like to applaud the Fitchburg Housing Authority and all those who assisted with this successful

application and continued commitment to our wonderful city.”

“Housing is a critical component to the state’s economy. The Baker-Polito has done a great job on placing a focus on housing whether it comes from new development or renovating existing stock,” **said Senator Dean Tran**. “Thank you to the ModPhase initiative for providing this grant program that will help Fitchburg Housing Authority in modernizing the Wallace Towers.”

“I would like to congratulate the City of Fitchburg and the Fitchburg Housing Authority. This grant will facilitate a comprehensive modernization of Wallace Towers,” **said Representative Stephan Hay**. “It will increase their capacity to serve a vulnerable population and result in a more functional building that will better serve residents, ensuring each tenant feels safe, secure, and supported in their home. I am thankful to Governor Baker, Lt. Governor Polito, and everyone at DHCD for their steadfast support of the North Central region and for providing the resources necessary to support our elderly community.”

“On behalf of the Fitchburg Housing Authority and our tenants I want to thank the Baker-Polito Administration for making it a priority to help seniors age in place in, especially seniors on fixed incomes,” **said Fitchburg Housing Authority Executive Director Doug Bushman**. “The ModPHASE program will help over 130 seniors in Fitchburg to remain in their homes surrounded by their friends and family in the community that they love by funding physical improvements with the inclusion of more local services. Another added benefit is that this program will decrease the costs for expensive nursing home care as seniors are able to remain in their homes. This is a win for everyone.”

The Baker-Polito Administration has shown a deep commitment to increasing the production of housing across income levels. Since 2015, the administration has invested more than \$1 billion in affordable housing, resulting in the production and preservation of more than 18,000 housing units, including 16,000 affordable units. In 2018, Governor Baker signed the largest housing bond bill in Massachusetts history, committing more than \$1.8 billion to the future of affordable housing production and preservation, which included more than \$600 million to address capital needs in our state-aided public housing portfolio. The administration has also advanced the development of more than 14,000 mixed-income housing units through the successful MassWorks Infrastructure Program, reformed the Housing Development Incentive Program, and worked with communities to implement smart-growth development and planning efforts.

Legislation filed by Governor Baker in February, [**An Act to Promote Housing Choices**](#)

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for targeted zoning reform to advance new housing production in Massachusetts and support the administration’s goal to produce 135,000 new housing units by 2025.

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2019 ModPHASE Awards

Amesbury Housing Authority, PowWow Villa 2, \$2.30 Million

The Amesbury Housing Authority will rehabilitate a 30-unit development built in 1962. The project includes roof replacement, kitchen and bath modernization, replacement of corroded cast iron pipes, as well as common room accessibility, and the creation of two fully accessible units. Expanded services will be provided principally through Elder Services Merrimack Valley and include meal delivery, crisis intervention, and help with obtaining Medicare benefits.

Beverly Housing Authority, Balch Street Apartments, \$1.98 Million

The Beverly Housing Authority will rehabilitate a 25-unit single-story garden style elderly development built in 1959. This site is a priority for the Beverly Housing Authority, which is devoting its entire FY22 Formula Funding Award to the project. Beverly has also received a commitment for \$100,000 in CPC funds. The project will replace windows, upgrade the electrical & fire alarm system, modernize kitchens & baths, improve landscaping to promote resident interaction, and create at least one fully accessible unit. Services will primarily be provided by Senior Care Inc., and include transportation to the nearby senior center, nutritional and financial training, and social activities.

Chelmsford Housing Authority, McFarlin Manor, \$4.08 Million

The Chelmsford Housing Authority will modernize a 53-unit, four-story low-rise elderly development built in 1982. The project will support aging-in-community, and includes kitchen and bath modernization, conversion of a unit to full accessibility, electrical panel replacement, window replacement, and fire alarm and sprinkler upgrades. Medical and home care services will be provided by Element Care and include skills training and counseling through Northeast Independent Living Program, Inc.

Fairhaven Housing Authority, Oxford Terrace, \$3.86 Million

The Fairhaven Housing Authority will modernize a 107-unit, low-rise two-story elderly development built in 1982. This development is well-suited to aging in place, and the project includes fire alarm upgrades, kitchen & bathroom modernization, window and balcony slider replacements, and bringing the 6 existing accessible units up to current 'Americans with Disability Act' standards. Fairhaven Housing Authority already has a Resident Services Coordinator on staff, and the development is serviced by Coastline Elderly, Bristol Elder Services, and Fairhaven Council on Aging. The Housing authority will contract new services to residents through Buzzards Bay Speech Therapy and M.O Life medical transportation services.

Fitchburg Housing Authority, Wallace Towers, \$8.07 Million

The Fitchburg Housing Authority will modernize a 130-unit, high-rise elderly development built in 1973. The project will undertake kitchen and bathroom upgrades, repairs to roof and exterior, replacement of fire alarm and sprinkler systems, upgrading 13 accessible units to current code, an expansion of the community room for service delivery, window replacement, and asbestos abatement, as well as replacement of baseboard heat with air source heat pumps to be funded by utility through LEAN program. Fitchburg plans to coordinate existing health care programs with new nutritional and socialization programs to promote aging-in-community in this downtown development with access to local amenities. Partners include Montachusset Opportunity Council, Spanish American Center, Fitchburg Veteran Services, and Fitchburg State University.

Lexington Housing Authority, VyneBrooke Village, \$1.6 Million

The Lexington Housing Authority will modernize a 48-unit, two-story elderly housing campus development built in 1973. This project will modernize kitchen and baths, and will be combined with previously awarded funds to convert three units to full accessibility. Services will be provided by Town of Lexington Human Services department, which will offer expanded fitness and wellbeing classes at the community center, as well as Enhancing Asian Community Health Inc., Dana Home, and Minuteman Senior Services.

Lowell Housing Authority, Lakeview Avenue, \$1.45 Million

The Lowell Housing Authority will modernize a 20-unit, single-story garden apartment elderly development built in 1958. This project will modernize kitchens and bathrooms, improve building envelope, upgrade electrical distribution, convert one unit to full accessibility, and substantially improve the site with an outdoor gathering space and new trees to block noise and exhaust pollution from a neighboring road. The project leverages community partnerships with Elder Services of Merrimack Valley, Tufts Health Plan, Lowell Council on Aging, and Mill City Grows.

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Office of Governor Charlie Baker and Lt. Governor Karyn Polito

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